REMARKS

Claims 16-18, and 20 are pending in the application. Claim 20 was allowed.

In the outstanding Office Action, claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatenable over Sundstedt et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,384,946), and claims 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sundstedt et al in view of Moss (U.S. Patent No. 6,354,661).

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

The rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sundstedt et al. is respectfully traverse.

The invention defined by claim 16 is a method for manufacturing a stretch slipcover. The method includes the step of:

(a) providing a stretch slipcover having elastic recovery force such that the stretch slipcover requires no second fabric having greater elastic recovery force to maintain the substantial absence of wrinkles.

Other steps involve:

(b) stretching the stretch slipcover of step (a) over a resilient cushion; and then

(c) releasing the stretch slipcover to allow the stretch slipcover to grip the resilient cushion.

Sundstedt et al does not show a method for manufacturing a stretch slipcover, and doesn't begin to suggest the steps set forth in claim 16.

Sundstedt et al describes a stowable vehicle seat (column 1 lines 5-10). In a preferred embodiment, the stowable base portion of the seat may comprise a resilient compressible material and an elastic cover arranged over the resilient compressible seat, but that doesn't suggest any of the detailed steps set forth in claim 16. The only other reference in Sundstedt et al to an elastic cover is found at Col. 4, lines 43-45, wherein a preferred manner is discussed for widening the seat section. Again, other then merely indicating that the seat section can have an elastic cover, there is no reference to or suggestion of the steps whereby the elastic cover can be placed over the compressible seat.

Referring now to Merriam-Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1983, the term "slipcover" is defined to mean "a removable protective covering for an article of furniture". In contrast, the elastic cover of Sundstedt et al is not depicted as being removable, only fixed on the vehicle seat. The elastic cover is shown as a permanent cover for the specifically designed seat structure as can be seen in reference to Figure 2. Sundstedt et al makes no suggestion as to whether the elastic cover can be removed and replaced without damaging the seat. Thus, at least for the reasons discussed above, Sundstedt et al does not contain any material disclosure that could arguably be construed to suggest the limitations of claim 16.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 17-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sundstedt et al in view of Moss is respectfully traverse.

Claims 17-18 are dependent upon claim 16 and define the fabric that can be used according to the claimed method. As discussed above, Sundstedt et al does not disclose, suggest, or make obvious the limitations of claim 16. Although Moss may disclose a cover (22) being composed of a spandex material, it cannot overcome the deficiencies of Sundstedt et al. Sundstedt et al does not disclose a slipcover, and it certainly does not suggest the detailed steps set forth in Applicant's claimed method.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusions

It is believed that the foregoing remarks constitute a complete response to the Examiner's Action dated April 7, 2005, and place this application in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that an interview or some other action on Applicant's behalf would expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact Applicant's attorney by telephone.

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